

or 17 years of age is doubled if there are two peers in the motor vehicle and quadrupled with three or more peers in the vehicle.

Crashes involving teenage injuries or fatalities are often high-profile tragedies in the area where they occur. However, when taken together, these individual tragedies speak to a national problem clearly illustrated by the staggering statistics I just mentioned. It is a problem that adversely affects teenage drivers, their passengers, and literally everyone else who operates or rides in a motor vehicle. Clearly, more work must be done to design and implement innovative methods that educate our young drivers on the awesome responsibilities that are associated with operating a motor vehicle safely.

One such method involves implementing and enforcing a graduated driver's license system, or a GDL system. Under a typical GDL system, a teenage driver passes through several sequential learning stages before earning the full privileges associated with an unrestricted driver's license. Each learning stage is designed to teach a teenage driver fundamental lessons on driver operations, responsibilities, and safety. Each stage also imposes certain restrictions, such as curfews on nighttime driving and limitations on passengers, that further ensure the safety of the teenage driver, his or her passengers, and other motorists.

First implemented over ten years ago, three-stage GDL systems now exist in 38 States. Furthermore, every State in the country has adopted at least one driving restriction for new teenage drivers. Several studies have concluded that GDL systems and other license restriction measures have been linked to an overall reduction on the number of teenage driver crashes and fatalities. In 1997, in the first full year that its GDL system was in effect, Florida experienced a 9 percent reduction in fatal and injurious motor vehicle crashes among teenage drivers between 15 and 18 years of age. After GDL systems were implemented in Michigan and North Carolina in 1997, the number of motor vehicle crashes involving teenage drivers 16 years in age decreased in each State by 25 percent and 27 percent, respectively. And in California, the numbers of teenage passenger deaths and injuries in crashes involving teenage drivers 16 years in age decreased by 40 percent between 1998 and 2000, the first three years that California's GDL system was in effect. The number of "at-fault" crashes involving teenage drivers decreased by 24 percent during the same period.

These statistics are promising and clearly show that many States are taking an important first step towards addressing this enormous problem concerning teenage driver safety. However, there is currently no uniformity between States with regards to GDL system requirements and other novice driver license restrictions. Some States have very strong initiatives in

place that promote safe teenage driving while others have very weak initiatives in place. Given how many teenagers are killed or injured in motor vehicle crashes each year, and given how many other motorists and passengers are killed or injured in motor vehicle crashes involving teenage drivers each year, Senator Warner and I believe that the time has come for an initiative that sets a national minimum safety standard for teen driving laws while giving each State the flexibility to set additional standards that meet the more specific needs of its teenage driver population. The bill that Senator Warner and I are introducing today—the STANDUP Act—is such an initiative. There are four principal components of this legislation about which I would like to discuss.

First, The STANDUP Act mandates that all States implement a national minimum safety standard for teenage drivers that contains three core requirements recommended by the National Transportation Safety Board. These requirements include implementing a three-stage GDL system, implementing at least some prohibition on nighttime driving, and placing a restriction on the number of passengers without adult supervision.

Second, the STANDUP Act directs the Secretary of Transportation to issue voluntary guidelines beyond the three core requirements that encourage States to adopt additional standards that improve the safety of teenage driving. These additional standards may include requiring that the learner's permit and intermediate stages be six months each, requiring at least 30 hours of behind-the-wheel driving for a novice driver in the learner's permit stage in the company of a licensed driver who is over 21 years of age, requiring a novice driver in the learner's permit stage to be accompanied and supervised by a licensed driver 21 years of age or older at all times when the novice driver is operating a motor vehicle, and requiring that the granting of an unrestricted driver's license be delayed automatically to any novice driver in the learner's permit or intermediate stages who commits a motor vehicle offense, such as driving while intoxicated, misrepresenting his or her true age, reckless driving, speeding, or driving without a fastened seatbelt.

Third, the STANDUP Act provides incentive grants to States that come into compliance within three fiscal years. Calculated on a State's annual share of the Highway Trust Fund, these incentive grants could be used for activities such as training law enforcement and relevant State agency personnel in the GDL law or publishing relevant educational materials on the GDL law.

Finally, the STANDUP Act calls for sanctions to be imposed on States that do not come into compliance after three fiscal years. The bill withholds 1.5 percent of a State's Federal highway share after the first fiscal year of

non-compliance, three percent after the second fiscal year, and six percent after the third fiscal year. The bill does allow a State to reclaim any withheld funds if that State comes into compliance within two fiscal years after the first fiscal year of non-compliance.

There are those who will say that the STANDUP Act infringes on States' rights. I respectfully disagree. I believe that working to protect and ensure the lives and safety of the millions of teenage drivers, their passengers, and other motorists in this country is national in scope and a job that is rightly suited for Congress. I also believe that the number of motor vehicle deaths and injuries associated with teenage drivers each year compels us to address this important national issue today and not tomorrow.

The teenage driving provisions within the STANDUP Act are both well-known and popular with the American public. A Harris Poll conducted in 2001 found that 95 percent of Americans support a requirement of 30 to 50 hours of practice driving within an adult, 92 percent of Americans support a six-month learner's permit stage, 74 percent of Americans support limiting the number of teen passengers in a motor vehicle with a teen driver, and 74 percent of Americans also support supervised or restricted driving during high-risk periods such as nighttime. Clearly, these numbers show that teen driving safety is an issue that transcends party politics and is strongly embraced by a solid majority of Americans. Therefore, I ask my colleagues today to join Senator Warner and myself in protecting the lives of our teenagers and in supporting this important legislation.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of this legislation be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 795

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Safe Teen and Novice Driver Uniform Protection Act of 2005" or the "STANDUP Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The National Transportation Safety Board has reported that—

(A) in 2002, teen drivers, which constituted only 6.4 percent of all drivers, were involved in 14.3 percent of all fatal motor vehicle crashes;

(B) motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Americans between 15 and 20 years of age;

(C) between 1994 and 2003, almost 64,000 Americans between 15 and 20 years of age died in motor vehicle crashes, an average of 122 per week; and

(D) in 2003—

(i) 3,657 American drivers between 15 and 20 years of age were killed in motor vehicle crashes;

(ii) 300,000 Americans between 15 and 20 years of age were injured in motor vehicle crashes; and